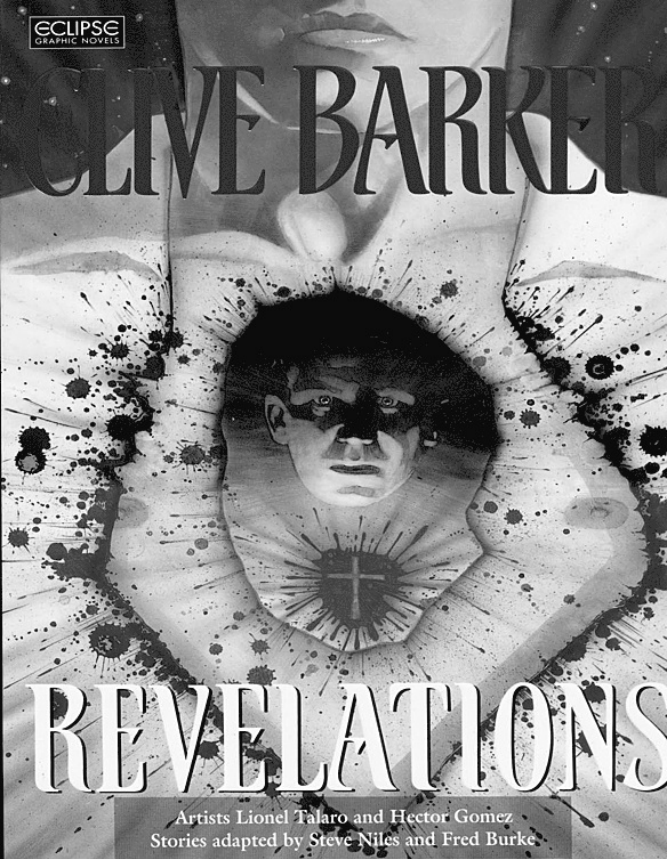


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GRAPHIC NOVELS

CLIVE BARKER



REVELATIONS

Artists Lionel Talaro and Hector Gomez
Stories adapted by Steve Niles and Fred Burke

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Adapted by Steve Niles
Illustrated by Lionel Talaro

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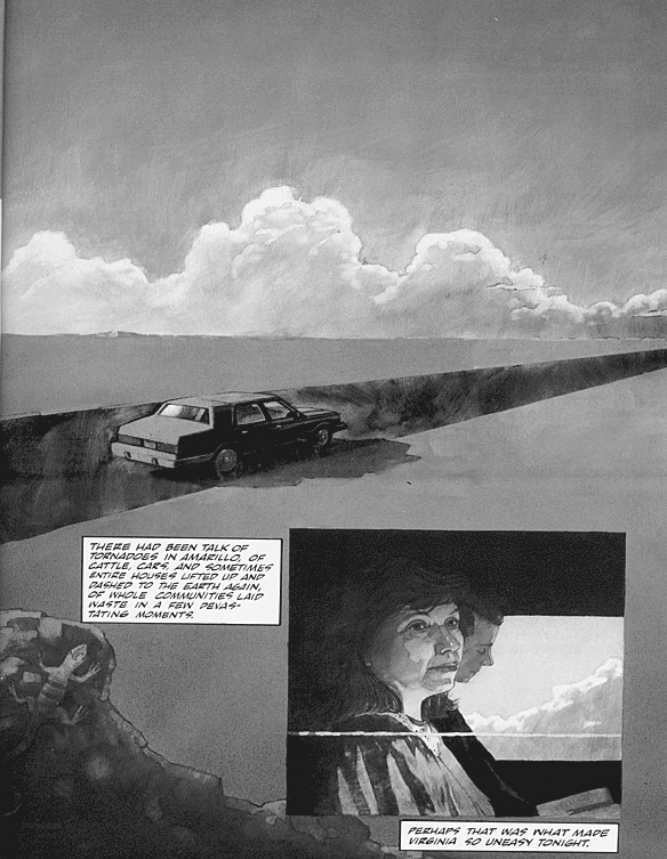
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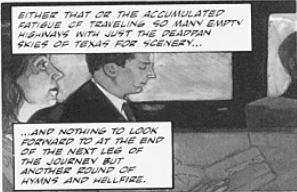
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THERE HAD BEEN TALK OF
TORNADOES IN AMARILLO, OF
CATTLE, CARS, AND SOMETIMES
ENTIRE HOUSES LIFTED UP AND
DASHED TO THE EARTH AGAIN,
OF WHOLE COMMUNITIES LAID
WASTE IN A FEW DEVAS-
TATING MOMENTS.



PERHAPS THAT WAS WHAT MADE
VIRGINIA SO UNEASY TONIGHT.



EITHER THAT OR THE ACCUMULATED
FATIGUE OF TRAVELING SO MANY EMPTY
HIGHWAYS WITH JUST THE DEADPAN
SKIES OF TEXAS FOR SCENERY...

...AND NOTHING TO LOOK
FORWARD TO AT THE END
OF THE NEXT LEG OF
THE JOURNEY BUT
ANOTHER ROUND OF
HYMNS AND HELLFIRE.



HER SPINE ACHING, SHE TRIED HER
BEST TO GET SOME SLEEP.

BUT THE HOT, STILL AIR CLUNG
AROUND HER NECK AND GAVE
HER DREAMS OF SUFFOCATION.



SHE GAVE UP HER ATTEMPT TO REST AND
CONTENTED HERSELF WITH WATCHING THE
FIELDS PASS AND COUNTING THE GRASS
ELEVATORS BRIGHT AGAINST THE
GATHERING THUNDERHEADS.



IN THE FRONT, EARL SANG TO HIMSELF AS HE
DROVE. BESIDE HER, JOHN--NO MORE THAN TWO
FEET AWAY BUT TO ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES
A MILLION MILES AWAY--STUDIED THE
EPISTLES OF ST. PAUL.





THE STORM CAME SUDDENLY AS EVENING FELL, LENDING DARKNESS TO DARKNESS, INSTANTLY PLUNGING THE AMARILLO-PAMPA HIGHWAY INTO WATERY NIGHT.



THE RAIN, THOUGH REFRESHING, HAD SOAKED THE ONLY DRESS JOHN APPROVED OF HER WEARING AT MEETINGS, UNEASE GROWN IN HER WITH EVERY MILE THEY COVERED TO PAMPA, LISTENING TO THE VEHEMENCE OF THE DOWNPOUR ON THE ROOF...

...AND TO HER HUSBAND JOHN, SPEAKING IN WHISPERS AT HER SIDE.

WHEREFORE HE SAITH AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST...

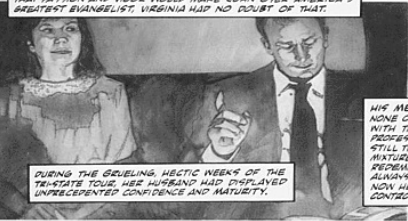
AND RISE FROM THE DEAD, AND CHRIST SHALL GIVE THEE LIGHT.

SEE THEN THAT YE WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY, NOT AS FOOLS, BUT AS WISE...

REDEEMING THE TIME, BECAUSE THE DAYS ARE EVIL.

HE SURELY KNEW THE PASSAGES HE WAS READING BY HEART. HE QUOTED THEM OFTEN ENOUGH, AND WITH SUCH A MIXTURE OF FAMILIARITY AND FRESHNESS THAT THE WORDS MIGHT HAVE BEEN HIS, NOT PAUL'S.

THAT PASSION AND VIGOR WOULD MAKE JOHN GYER AMERICA'S GREATEST EVANGELIST, VIRGINIA HAD NO DOUBT OF THAT.



DURING THE BUZZLING, HECTIC WEEKS OF THE TRI-STATE TOUR, HER HUSBAND HAD DISPLAYED UNPRECEDENTED CONFIDENCE AND MATURITY.



HIS MESSAGE HAD LOST NONE OF ITS VEHEMENCE WITH THIS NEWFOUND PROFESSIONALISM--IT WAS STILL THAT OLD FASHIONED MIXTURE OF DAMNATION AND REDEMPTION THAT HE ALWAYS PROPOUNDED--BUT NOW HE HAD COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE GIFT.

SHE KNEW HIS RHETORIC, BOTH PHYSICAL AND VERBAL, SO WELL.

SOMETIMES SHE THOUGHT SHE KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM THERE WAS TO KNOW; THAT HE HAD NOTHING LEFT TO TELL HER THAT SHE TRULY WANTED TO HEAR.

TONIGHT THEY WOULD LIE IN SEPARATE BEDS, AND HE WOULD SLEEP THAT DEEP, EASY SLEEP THAT CAME READILY TO HIM, WHILE SHE SURREPTITIOUSLY SWALLOWED A PILL OR TWO TO BRING SOME WELCOME SERENITY.

BUT THEN THE SENTIMENT WAS PROBABLY MUTUAL. THEY HAD LONG AGO CEASED TO HAVE A MARRIAGE RECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH.

"SLEEP," HE HAD OFTEN SAID. "IT'S A TIME TO COMMUNE WITH THE LORD." EVER BELIEVER IN THE EFFICACY OF DREAMS, THOUGH HE DIDN'T TALK OF WHAT HE SAW IN THEM, THE TIME WOULD COME WHEN HE WOULD UNVEIL THE MAJESTY OF HIS VISIONS. SHE HAD NO DOUBT OF THAT.

ROOMS SEVEN AND EIGHT, I GOT THE KEY TO THE INTERCONNECTING DOOR, TOO.

GOOD.

LAST TWO IN THE PLACE. I'LL DRIVE THE CAR AROUND. THE ROOMS ARE AT THE FAR END.

THE INTERIOR OF THE TWO ROOMS
WAS A HYMN TO BANALITY.

THEY'D STAYED IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE
A THOUSAND CELLS LIKE THESE.

DAMN.

JOHN WAS INSENSITIVE TO HIS SUR-
ROUNDINGS, BUT TO VIRGINIA'S EYES
THESE ROOMS WERE AN APT MODEL
FOR PURGATORY. SOULLESS
LIMITS IN WHICH NOTHING HAD
HAPPENED NOR EVER WOULD.



THERE WAS NOTHING TO MARK THESE ROOMS
OUT AS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS.



BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING
DIFFERENT IN HER TONIGHT.

IT WASN'T TALK OF TORNADOES THAT
HAD BROUGHT THIS STRANGENESS ON.
SHE FELT ODLY REMOVED FROM
HERSELF, AS THOUGH SHE WERE
WATCHING EVENTS THROUGH A VEIL
DENSER THAN THE WARM RAIN
FALLING OUTSIDE THE DOOR.



THERE WAS A STRANGE
NUMBNESS IN HER
LIMBS. SHE WAS
ALMOST SLEEPWALKING.

SHE TRIED TO CONTROL HER
SENSE OF DISLOCATION BY
RELAXING.

IT WAS EASIER
SAID THAN DONE.

SOMEBODY HAD A TELEVISION ON IN A
NEARBY ROOM, AND THE LATE-NIGHT
MOVIE WAS WORD-FOR-WORD CLEAR
THROUGH THE PAPER THIN WALLS.



ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?

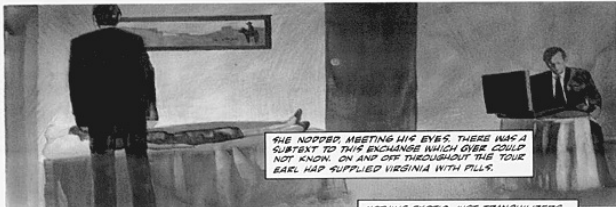


EARL, EVER SOLICITOUS.

YES, I'M FINE.
THANK YOU. A
LITTLE THIRSTY.



I'LL SEE IF I
CAN GET SOMETHING
FOR YOU TO DRINK. THEY
PROBABLY HAVE A
COKE MACHINE.



SHE NODDED, MEETING HIS EYES. THERE WAS A
SUBTEXT TO THIS EXCHANGE WHICH GYER COULD
NOT KNOW. ON AND OFF THROUGHOUT THE TOUR
EARL HAD SUPPLIED VIRGINIA WITH PILLS.

NOTHING EXOTIC. JUST TRANQUILIZERS
TO SOOTH HER INCREASINGLY JANGLED
NERVES, BUT THEY--LIKE STIMULANTS,
MAKEUP, AND JEWELRY--WERE NOT
LOOKED KINDLY UPON BY A MAN OF
GYER'S PRINCIPLES.



WHEN, BY CHANCE, HER
HUSBAND HAD DISCOVERED
THE DRUGS, THERE
HAD BEEN AN UGLY
SCENE. EARL HAD TAKEN
THE BRUNT OF HIS
EMPLOYEE'S IRE, FOR
WHICH VIRGINIA WAS
DEEPLY GRATEFUL.

THOUGH EARL WAS UNDER STRICT
INSTRUCTIONS NEVER TO REPEAT THE
CRIME, HE WAS SOON SUPPLYING HER
AGAIN. THEIR GUILT WAS AN ALMOST
PLEASURABLE SECRET BETWEEN
THEM. SHE REAP COMPLICITY IN
HIS EYES, AS HE DID IN HER'S.

"NO COCA-COLA FOR HER, EARL."

WELL, I JUST
THOUGHT WE
COULD MAKE
AN EXCEPTION.

EXCEPTION?

RHETORIC WAS IN THE AIR, AND
EARL CURSED HIS IDIOT TONGUE.

THE LORD
DOESN'T GIVE US
LAWS TO LIVE BY SO
THAT WE CAN MAKE
EXCEPTIONS. EARL
YOU KNOW BETTER
THAN THAT.

AT THAT MOMENT EARL DIDN'T MUCH CARE WHAT THE
LORD DID OR SAID. HIS CONCERN WAS FOR VIRGINIA.

SHE WAS STRONG, HE KNEW, DESPITE HER
DEEP SOUTH COURTESY AND THE ACCOMPANYING
RACISMS OF FAULTY, BUT NOBODY'S
STRENGTH WAS LIMITLESS, AND EARL SENSED
THAT VIRGINIA WAS CLOSE TO COLLAPSE.

"MAYBE YOU COULD GET
ME SOME ICE WATER?"

ICE WATER,
COMING
RIGHT UP.

SHE GAVE SO MUCH TO HER HUSBAND
MORE THAN ONCE IN THE FIRST WEEKS
OF THE TOUR EARL HAD THOUGHT THAT
PERHAPS SHE DESERVED BETTER.

WHY DON'T YOU
CALL THE OFFICE AND
HAVE SOMEONE BRING
IT OVER? I WANT TO
GO THROUGH NEXT
WEEK'S ITINERARY
WITH YOU.

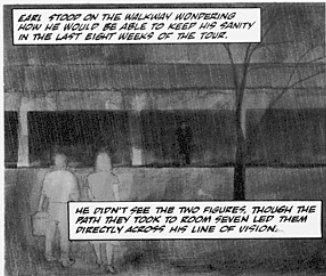
"IT'S NO PROBLEM..."

...REALLY, BESIDES,
I SHOULD CALL PAMPA,
AND TELL THEM WE'RE
DELAYED.



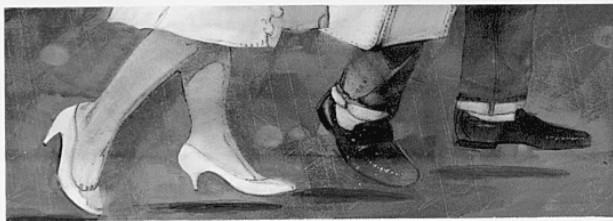
HE NEEDED AN EXCUSE TO HAVE SOME TIME TO HIMSELF. THE ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN VIRGINIA AND OWEN WAS DETERIORATING BY THE DAY.

THE COTTONWOOD TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LOT HUNG ITS BUILDING HEAD IN THE FURY OF THE DELUGE. HE KNEW EXACTLY HOW IT FELT.



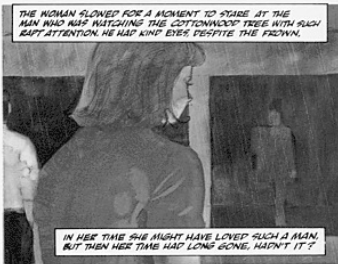
EARL STOOD ON THE WALKWAY WONDERING HOW HE WOULD BE ABLE TO KEEP HIS SANITY IN THE LAST EIGHT WEEKS OF THE TOUR.

HE DIDN'T SEE THE TWO FIGURES, THOUGH THE PATH THEY TOOK TO ROOM SEVEN LED THEM DIRECTLY ACROSS HIS LINE OF VISION.



THEY WALKED THROUGH THE DRENCHING RAIN FROM THE WASTEGROUND BEHIND THE MANAGER'S OFFICE--WHERE, BACK IN 1995, THEY HAD PARKED THEIR RED BUICK.

THOUGH THE RAIN FELL IN A STEADY TORRENT, IT LEFT THEM BOTH UNTOUCHED.



THE WOMAN SLOWED FOR A MOMENT TO STARE AT THE MAN WHO WAS WATCHING THE COTTONWOOD TREE WITH RAPT ATTENTION. HE HAD KIND EYES DESPITE THE FROWN.

IN HER TIME SHE MIGHT HAVE LOVED SUCH A MAN, BUT THEN HER TIME HAD LONG GONE, HADN'T IT?

BUT BEFORE SHE COULD DECIDE, BUCK, HER HUSBAND, TURNED BACK TO HER...



A CHILL RAN DOWN EARL'S BACK, TOO MUCH STARING AT THE RAIN, THAT AND TOO MUCH FRUITLESS LONGING.



SADIE BURNING LOOKED AT HER HUSBAND. THE YEARS HAD NOT TEMPERED THE RESENTMENT SHE FELT TOWARD HIM, ANY MORE THAN THEY'D IMPROVED HIS SHIFTY FEATURES OR HIS TOO-EASY LAUGH.

SHE HAD NOT MUCH LIKED HIM ON JUNE 2, 1933, AND SHE DIDN'T MUCH LIKE HIM NOW, PRECISELY THIRTY YEARS ON.

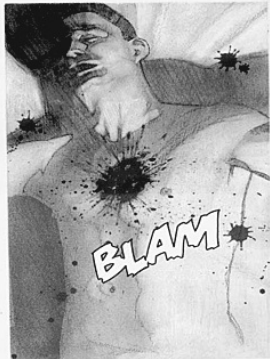


BUCK, UNKNOWNING TO THE LAST, HAD TAKEN HER LOW SPIRITS AS A CUE FOR A SECOND HONEYMOON. THIS PHENOMENAL HYPOCRISY HAD FINALLY OVERRIDDEN ANY LINGERING THOUGHTS OF TOLERANCE OR FORGIVENESS SHE MIGHT HAVE ENTERTAINED...

...AND WHEN, THREE PECADES AGO TONIGHT, THEY HAD CHECKED INTO THE COTTONWOOD MOTEL, SHE HAD COME PREPARED FOR MORE THAN A NIGHT OF LOVE.



BUT IT HAD LED TO SUCH GRUBBY BEHAVIOR THAT EVENTUALLY SHE HAD TIRED OF HIS ENDLESS RECEPTIONS.



THEY HAD TAKEN HER TO THE
CARSON COUNTY JAIL, AND AFTER
A FEW WEEKS, TO TRIAL.

SHE NEVER ONCE TRIED TO DENY THE
MURDER. THERE HAD BEEN ENOUGH
DECEPTION IN HER THIRTY-EIGHT
YEARS OF LIFE AS IT WAS.



AND SO WHEN THEY FOUND HER GUILTY,
THEY TOOK HER TO HUNTSVILLE STATE
PRISON, CHOSE A BRIGHT DAY THE
FOLLOWING OCTOBER, AND RUMOROUSLY
PASSED 2,250 VOLTS THROUGH HER
BODY, STOPPING HER UNREPENTANT
HEART ALMOST INSTANTLY.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE; A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH. SHE HAD BEEN
BROUGHT UP WITH SUCH SIMPLE EQUATIONS. SHE'D NOT
BEEN UNHAPPY TO DIE BY THE SAME MATHEMATICS.



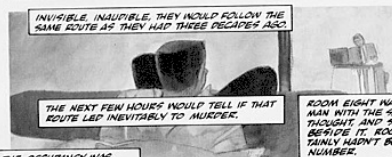
BUT TONIGHT SHE AND BUCK HAD ELECTED TO RETRACE THE JOURNEY THEY' TAKEN THIRTY YEARS BEFORE, TO SEE IF THEY COULD DISCOVER HOW AND WHY THEIR MARRIAGE HAD ENDED IN MURDER.

IT WAS A CHANCE OFFERED TO MANY DEAD LOVERS, THOUGH FEW, APPARENTLY, TOOK IT UP.

PERHAPS THE THOUGHT OF EXPERIENCING AGAIN THE CATASTROPHIC THAT HAD ENDED THEIR LIVES WAS TOO DISTASTEFUL. SADIE, HOWEVER, COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER IF IT HAD ALL BEEN PREDESTINED.



THIS ONE-NIGHT STAND WOULD GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEST HISTORY.



INVISIBLE, INAUDIBLE, THEY WOULD FOLLOW THE SAME ROUTE AS THEY HAD THREE DECADES AGO.

THE NEXT FEW HOURS WOULD TELL IF THAT ROUTE LED INEVITABLY TO MURDER.



ROOM EIGHT WAS OCCUPIED BY THE MAN WITH THE SAD EYES, SADIE THOUGHT, AND SO WAS THE ROOM BESIDE IT, ROOM SEVEN--IT CERTAINLY HADN'T BEEN THEIR LUCKY NUMBER.

THE OCCUPANCY WAS NOT A PROBLEM. SADIE HAD LONG BECOME USED TO THE ETHEREAL STATE, TO HAUNTERING UNSEEN AMONG THE LIVING. IN SUCH A CONDITION SHE HAD ATTENDED HER NIECE'S WEDDING, AND LATER ON HER FATHER'S FUNERAL, STANDING BESIDE THE GRAVE WITH THE DEAD OLD MAN AND GOSSIPING ABOUT THE MOURNERS.

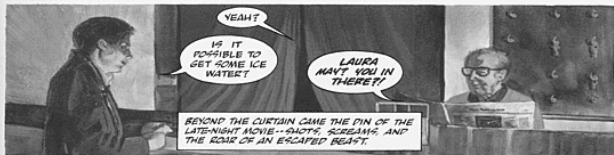


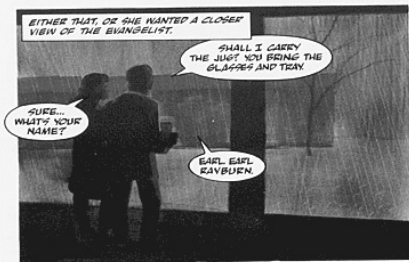
BUCK, HOWEVER--NEVER AN AGILE INDIVIDUAL--WAS MORE PRONE TO CARELESSNESS. SHE HOPED HE WOULD BE CAREFUL TONIGHT. AFTER ALL HE WANTED TO SEE THE EXPERIMENT THROUGH AS MUCH AS SHE DID.



AS SADIE MOVED THROUGH THE WALL AND INTO THE ROOM IN WHICH THEIR FATAL FARE HAD BEEN PLAYED OUT, SHE WONDERED IF THE SHOT HAD HURT HIM VERY MUCH.

SHE MUST ASK HIM TONIGHT, SHE THOUGHT, SHOULD THE OPPORTUNITY ARISE.









SOMETIMES SHE FELT HE COULD SEE RIGHT INTO HER, THAT ALL HER PRIVATE GUILT WAS AN OPEN BOOK TO HIM. SHE WAS CERTAIN THAT IF SHE GOT UP NOW AND ROTTED THROUGH HER BARS FOR MEDICATION, HE WOULD ASK HER WHAT SHE WAS DOING.

SHE'D BLURT THE TRUTH OUT FOR SURE. SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO RESIST THE HEAT OF THOSE ACCUSING EYES.



THERE WAS AN EVASIVE QUALITY TO THE LIGHT IN THE ROOM. IT DISTRESSED HER, AND SHE WANTED TO CLOSE HER LIPS AGAINST ITS TRICKS.

ONLY MOMENTS BEFORE, THE LIGHT HAD CONJURED A MIRAGE AT THE END OFF THE BED, A MOUTH-WING FLICKER OF SUBSTANCE THAT HAD ALMOST CONGEALED IN THE AIR BEFORE FLITTING AWAY.



...AND THERE CAME OUT OF THE SMOKE LOCUSTS UPON THE EARTH...

SHE INSTANTLY RECOGNIZED THE PASSAGE; ITS IMAGERY WAS UNMISTAKABLE.

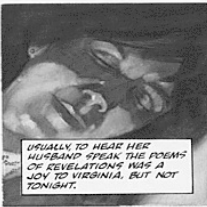
...AND UNTO THEM WAS GIVEN POWER, AS THE SCORPIONS OF THE EARTH HAVE POWER.

THE VERSE WAS FROM THE REVELATIONS OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE. HE HAD DECLAIMED THEM TIME AFTER TIME AT MEETINGS.

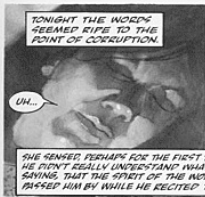


AND IT WAS COMMANDED THEM...

OVER LOVED REVELATIONS. ITS POETRY, INSTEAD OF COMING OUT OF HIM, CAME THROUGH HIM. HELPLESS IN ITS GRIP HE ROSE ON A SPIRAL OF EVER MORE AWESOME METAPHOR.



USUALLY TO HEAR HER HUSBAND SPEAK THE POEMS OF REVELATIONS WAS A JOY TO VIRGINIA, BUT NOT TONIGHT.



THE WOMAN WAS LYING, OF COURSE; THE WORDS DID DISTURB HER. THEY DISTURBED SADIE, TOO, BUT ONLY BECAUSE THEY SEEMED SO PITIFULLY MELODRAMATIC, A DRUG-DEAD DREAM OF ARMAGEDDON, MORE COMICAL THAN INTIMIDATING.







YOU SEE
THAT, SWEETHEART? YOU
MADE THAT.

IT CERTAINLY WAS A PERMANENT
MARK. ABOUT THE ONLY ONE
SHE'D EVER MADE ON THE MAN,
SHE SUSPECTED.

YOU CHEATED
FROM THE BEGINNING.
DIDN'T YOU?

WE'RE NOT
TALKING ABOUT
CHEATING HERE--WE'RE
TALKING ABOUT
SHOOTING.

SEEMS TO ME
ONE SUBJECT LEADS
TO THE OTHER, AND
BACK AGAIN.





SHE WAS ABOUT TO REPLY TO HIS SUGGESTION WHEN IN CAME THE MAN WITH SOULFUL EYES ACCOMPANIED BY A WOMAN WHOSE FACE RINGS A BELL IN SAPIE'S MEMORY.

WHAT SAY WE FORGET WHAT YOU SAID AND LIE DOWN AND TALK?

ICE WATER.

GOING TO GET UNFRESH?

IN A MINUTE, BUCK. WE'VE GOT ALL NIGHT, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.



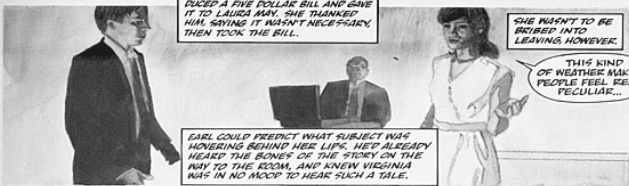
I'M LAURA MAY CADE.

OF COURSE, YOU'RE LITTLE LAURA MAY.

THE GIRL HAD BEEN FIVE OR SIX WHEN SAPIE WAS LOST HERE; AN ODD, SECRETIVE CHILD, FULL OF SLY LOOKS.

IT'S REAL NICE HAVING YOU FOLKS HERE. WE DON'T GET MUCH HAPPENING HERE, JUST THE OCCASIONAL TORNADO...

EVER NODDED TO EARL, WHO PRODUCED A FIVE DOLLAR BILL AND GAVE IT TO LAURA MAY. SHE THANKED HIM, SAYING IT WASN'T NECESSARY, THEN TOOK THE BILL.



SHE WASN'T TO BE BRIBED INTO LEAVING, HOWEVER.

THIS KIND OF WEATHER MAKES PEOPLE FEEL REAL PECULIAR...

EARL COULD PREDICT WHAT SUBJECT WAS HOVERING BEHIND HER LIPS. HE'D ALREADY HEARD THE BONES OF THE STORY ON THE WAY TO THE ROOM, AND KNEW VIRGINIA WAS IN NO MOOD TO HEAR SUCH A TALE.



THANK YOU FOR THE WATER--

MY WIFE'S BEEN SUFFERING FROM HEAT EXHAUSTION.

YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL, M'AM. PEOPLE DO SOME MIGHTY WEIRD THINGS--

LIKE WHAT?



OH, MURDER MOSTLY.









WHY DON'T WE
GO TO MY ROOM?
I DON'T LIKE IT
OUT HERE.

WHAT
ABOUT YOUR
PAPA?



HE'LL BE
DEAD DRUNK
BY NOW. JUST
TAKE IT QUIETLY.
HE'LL NEVER
KNOW.

EARL WASN'T VERY HAPPY WITH THIS GAME PLAN.
IT WAS MORE THAN HIS JOB WAS WORTH TO BE
FOUND IN BED WITH LAURA MAY. HE WAS A
MARRIED MAN, EVEN IF HE HADN'T SEEN
BARBARA IN THREE MONTHS.



DON'T COME
IF YOU DON'T
WANT TO.

IT'S NOT
THAT.



IN A SENSE, THOUGH EARL COULDN'T KNOW IT
AT THE TIME, ALL THAT LAY AHEAD--THE
FARSE, THE BLOODLETTINGS, THE INEVITABLE
TRAGEDY--PIVOTED ON LAURA MAY UNCON-
SCIOUSLY WETTING HER LOWER LIP.

AH, SHIT.
YOU'RE TOO MUCH,
LAURA MAY, YOU
KNOW THAT?



SOMEWHERE OVER TOWARD
SKELLYTOWN THE CLOUDS GAVE OUT A
LOW ROLL OF THUNDER, LIKE A
CIRCUS DRUMMER BEFORE SOME
PARTICULARLY ELABORATE ACROBATICS.







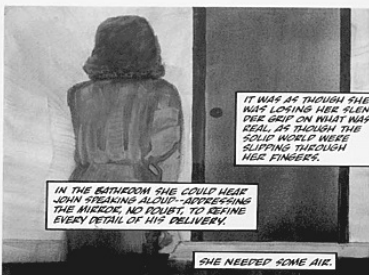
**MURDER!
FOR GOD'S SAKE,
SOMEBODY STOP
THEM!**



MURDER!



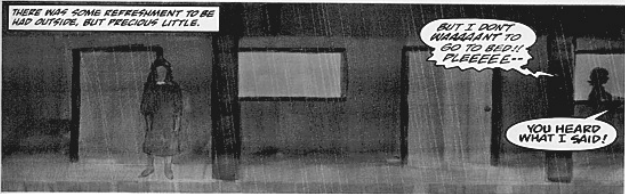
HER HEAD FELT SO LIGHT
IT MIGHT FLOAT OFF LIKE
A BALLOON. SELDOM IN
HER LIFE HAD SHE
FELT SO STRANGE.



IT WAS AS THOUGH SHE
WAS LOSING HER SLEN-
DER GRIP ON WHAT WAS
REAL, AS THOUGH THE
SOLID WORLD WERE
SLIPPING THROUGH
HER FINGERS.

IN THE BATHROOM SHE COULD HEAR
JOHN SPEAKING ALOUD--APPRESSING
THE MICRO, NO DOUBT, TO REFINE
EVERY DETAIL OF HIS DELIVERY.

SHE NEEDED SOME AIR.



THERE WAS SOME REFRESHMENT TO BE
HAD OUTSIDE, BUT PRECIOUS LITTLE.

BUT I DON'T
WANT TO
GO TO BED!!
PLEEEEEE--

YOU HEARD
WHAT I SAID!



FOR MAYBE TEN SECONDS
THE VOICE WAS MUSHY.
THEN IT BEGAN AGAIN, IN
A HIGHER KEY.

WHEEEEEEE!

GO ON, YOU
CRY. THERE'S PLENTY
OF REASON.



SHE TRUSTED UNHAPPINESS
IN PEOPLE. MORE AND MORE
IT WAS ALL SHE TRUSTED.
SADNESS WAS SO MUCH
MORE HONEST THAN THE
ARTIFICIAL BENIGNITY THAT
WAS ALL THE STYLE THESE
DAYS. THAT FACADE OF
EMPTY-HEADED OPTIMISM
THAT WAS PASTERED OVER
THE DESPAIR THAT EVERY-
ONE FELT IN THEIR HEART
OF HEARTS.

THE CHILD WAS EXPRESSING THAT WISE
PANIC NOW, AS IT CRIED IN THE NIGHT.
SHE SILENTLY APPLAUDED ITS HONESTY.

IN THE BATHROOM, JOHN
GYER GAVE SOME TIME
OVER TO THOUGHT.



HE COULD SMELL HIS OWN
STALE SWEAT. HE NEEDED
A SHOWER, AND THEN A
GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP
TOMORROW: PAMPA,
MEETINGS, SPEECHES,
THOUSANDS OF HANDS
TO BE SHAKEN AND
BLESSINGS TO BE
BESTOWED.



SOMETIMES HE FELT SO
TIRED, AND THEN HE'D
GET TO WONDERING IF
THE LORD COULDN'T
LIGHTEN HIS BURDEN
A LITTLE. BUT THAT
WAS THE DEVIL TALKING
IN HIS EAR, WASN'T IT?



HE KNEW BETTER THAN
TO PAY THAT SQUIRRELY
VOICE MUCH ATTENTION.
IF YOU LISTENED ONCE,
THE DOUBTS WOULD GET
HOLD. THE WAY THEY
HAD OF VIRGINIA.

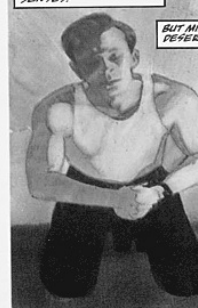


HE WOULD HAVE TO BRING
HER BACK TO THE PATH
OF THE RIGHTEOUS, MAKE
HER SEE THE DANGER
HER SOUL WAS IN. THERE
WOULD BE TEARS AND
COMPLAINTS; MAYBE SHE
WOULD BE BRUISED A
LITTLE.



BUT BRUISES HEAL.

HE TRIED TO FIND SOME
BENIGN WORDS, A GENTLE
PRAYER TO ASK FOR THE
STRENGTH TO FINISH
HIS TASK, AND TO BRING
VIRGINIA BACK TO HER
SENSES.



BUT MILDNESS HAD
DEFERRED HIM.



IT WAS THE VOCABULARY
OF REVELATIONS THAT
CAME BACK TO HIS LIPS.
UNBIDDEN, HE LET THE
WORDS SPILL OUT, EVEN
THOUGH THE FEVER IN
HIM BURNED BRIGHTER
WITH EVERY SYLLABLE
HE SPOKE.





THE BEDROOM, IT SEEMED, WAS
A MAUSOLEUM FOUNDED IN THE
NAME OF TRIVIA.

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK
?

THE THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS ALL LAURA
MAY'S DOING SHREAK EARL'S STOMACH. THE
WOMAN WAS CLEARLY VERGING ON LUNACY.

THIS IS MY
COLLECTION.

SO I
SEE.

I'VE BEEN COLLECTING SINCE I WAS SIX.
EVERYBODY LEAVES SOMETHING BEHIND. EVEN
IF IT'S ONLY A DEAD MATCH OR A TISSUE WITH
LIPSTICK ON IT. WE USED TO HAVE A MEXICAN
GIRL, OPHELIA, WHO CLEANED ROOMS
WHEN I WAS A CHILD.

IT STARTED AS A GAME.
REALLY, SHE'D ALWAYS BRING
ME SOMETHING FROM THE
GUESTS WHO'D LEFT. WHEN
SHE DIED I TOOK OVER
COLLECTING.

EARL BEGAN TO GRASP THE ABSURD POETRY OF THE MUSEUM. IN LAURA MAY'S NEAT BODY WAS ALL THE AMBITION OF A GREAT CURATOR.



NOT FOR HER MERE ART. SHE WAS COLLECTING KEEPSAKES OF A MORE INTIMATE NATURE.

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL MARKER.

OH, YES. IT WOULDN'T BE MUCH USE IF I DIDN'T KNOW WHO IT ALL BELONGED TO. NOW WOULD IT?

INCREDIBLE.

HE SUSPECTED SHE DIDN'T SHOW HER COLLECTION TO MANY PEOPLE. HE FELT ODDLY WONDERED TO BE VIEWING IT.

I'VE GOT SOME REALLY PRIZE THINGS STUFF I DON'T PUT ON DISPLAY.



OH?

THE TISSUE PAPER THAT LINED THE DRAWER RUSTLED AS SHE SHOWED HIM HER SELECTION OF SPECIAL ACQUISITIONS...



...A SOILED TISSUE FOUND BENEATH THE BED OF A HOLLYWOOD STAR WHO HAD TRAGICALLY DIED SIX WEEKS AFTER STAYING AT THE HOTEL...

...AN EMPTY BOOK OF MATCHES WHICH SHE HAD TRACED TO A HOMOSEXUAL BAR IN AMARILLO DISCARDED BY Y...



...A HEROIN NEEDLE CARELESSLY LEFT BY X...

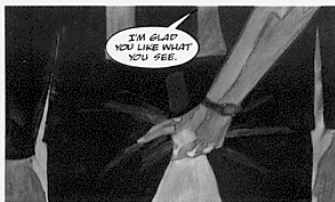


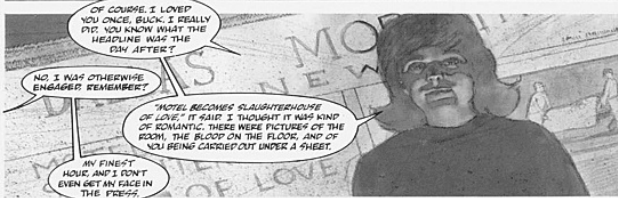
...THE NAMES SHE MENTIONED MEANT LITTLE OR NOTHING TO EARL, BUT HE PLAYED THE GAME AS HE FELT SHE WANTED IT TO BE PLAYED, MINGLING EXCLAMATIONS OF DISBELIEF WITH GENTLE LAUGHTER.





A SMITH AND WESSON .38, IN PRISTINE CONDITION. IT TOOK EARL ONLY A MOMENT TO REALIZE WHICH MOTEL GUEST THIS PIECE OF HISTORY HAD BELONGED TO.







I GOT THREE HUNDRED PROPOSALS OF MARRIAGE WHILE I WAS WAITING FOR THE CHAIR-- DID I EVER TELL YOU THAT?

OH, YEAH? DID THEY COME AND VISIT YOU? GIVE YOU A BIT OF THE OLD JAZZ TO KEEP YOUR MIND OFF THE BIG DAY?

NO.

JUST THINKING ABOUT IT'S GETTING ME COOKING, SADIE. WHY DON'T YOU COME AND GET IT WHILE IT'S HOT?

WE CAME HERE TO TALK, BUCK.

WE TALKED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE. I DON'T WANT TO TALK NO MORE. NOW COME HERE YOU PROMISED.



NOW YOU'RE BEING SENSIBLE.

THE RAIN HAD COOLED VIRGINIA'S FACE SOMEWHAT, AND THE TRANQUILIZERS SHE'D TAKEN WERE FINALLY BEGINNING TO SOOTHE HER SYSTEM. IN THE BATHROOM, JOHN WAS STILL PRAYING, HIS VOICE RISING AND FALLING.



AS SHE WATCHED THE RAIN, VIRGINIA THOUGHT SHE HEARD A GROAN FROM THE NEXT ROOM.

SHE FROZE. THE GROAN CAME AGAIN, LOUDER. SHE FELT HERSELF BEGIN TO TREMBLE.





GIVE
A LITTLE, DAMN
YOU...

THE WORDS,
THOUGH
BLURRED, WERE
UNMISTAKABLE.

PLAY
THE GAME, WILL
YOU?

THERE WAS ANGER
IN THOSE WORDS.



VIRGINIA LOOKED
THROUGH INTO ROOM
EIGHT. THERE WAS A
SHADOW ON THE BED.
IT NEITHER DIS-
TRESSINGLY, AS IF
ATTEMPTING TO
DEVOUR ITSELF.

MORE VOICES ROSE FROM THE
SHADOW. NOT ONE VOICE THIS
TIME, BUT TWO.



THE WORDS WERE JUMBLED. IN HER GROWING PANIC SHE
COULD MAKE LITTLE SENSE OF THEM. SHE COULDN'T TURN
HER BACK ON THE SCENE, HOWEVER. SHE STARED, TRYING
TO MAKE SENSE OF THE SHIFTING CONFIGURATION.

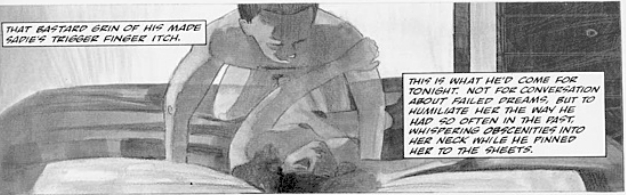


A SMATTERING OF WORDS CAME CLEAR,
AND WITH THEM, A RECOGNITION.



SHE HEARD A WOMAN'S
VOICE PROTESTING. SHE
EVEN BEGAN TO SEE THE
SPEAKER, STRUGGLING
BENEATH A PARTNER.

HER FIRST INSTINCT HAD BEEN CORRECT.
IT WAS A DEVOURING, OF A KIND.



THAT BASTARD GRIN OF HIS MADE
SADIE'S TRIGGER FINGER ITCH.

THIS IS WHAT HE'D COME FOR
TONIGHT. NOT FOR CONVERSATION
ABOUT FAILED DREAMS, BUT TO
HUMILIATE HER THE WAY HE
HAD SO OFTEN IN THE PAST,
WHISPERING OBSCENITIES INTO
HER NECK WHILE HE PINNED
HER TO THE SHEETS.



THE PLEASURE HE TOOK IN HER
DISCOMFORT MADE HER SEETHE.

LET
GO OF
ME!



LET HER
ALONE.



WELL, WE'VE
GOT AN
AUDIENCE.



HOW MUCH CAN
SHE SEE OR HEAR
ENOUGH TO KNOW
WHO WE ARE?

COME ON.
IT'S ONLY THE
CRAZY LADY.

KEEP
AWAY FROM
ME.



YOU CAN'T HARM
ME NOW, WOMAN.
I'M ALREADY DEAD.
REMEMBER?

WHAT LITTLE CHANCE OF
RECONCILIATION THERE
HAD BEEN HAD DEGEN-
ERATED INTO A BLOODY
FARCE. THE ONLY
SOLUTION FOR SADIE
WAS TO GET OUT, LEAV-
ING POOR VIRGINIA TO
MAKE WHATEVER SENSE OF
IT SHE COULD.



THE LONGER SHE
STAYED TO FIGHT WITH
BUCK, THE WORSE THE
SITUATION WOULD
BECOME FOR ALL
THREE OF THEM.

WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

OUT.







DON'T TALK NONSENSE! I ASKED HIM TO SUPPLY THEM. HE DIDN'T WANT TO DEFEY YOU JOHN. IT WAS ME ALL ALONG.

NO. YOU WON'T SAVE HIM. NOT THIS TIME. HE'S WORKED TO SUBVERT ME ALL ALONG. I SEE THAT NOW. WORKED TO HARM MY CREWDE THROUGH YOU. WELL I'M WIFE TO HIM NOW. OH YES. OH YES!



WHERE IS HE? GONE FOR MORE OF THE SAME FILTH?

NO! I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE'S GONE.

YOU PRAY, WOMAN. YOU GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND THANK THE LORD I'M HERE TO SAVE YOU FROM SATAN.



HER BLEARY EYES CAME TO REST ON A FEW TABLETS STILL ON THE FLOOR. ALL WAS NOT QUITE LOST.

BUT, SOMEONE HAD THEIR EYES ON HER.



HER HEART SEEMED TO LOSE ITS RHYTHM AS SHE REMEMBERED THE SHADOWS IN THE ROOM NEXT DOOR. THERE HAD BEEN TWO. ONE HAD DEPARTED, BUT THE OTHER...?



IT WAS STARING AT HER. SHE COULD SEE ITS EYES. HER TENUOUS GRASP OF ITS EXISTENCE WAS IMPROVING.



AND THEN, AS HER OUTSTRETCHED HAND BRUSHED AGAINST ITS SMOKE FORM, AN ENTIRE PORTRAIT OF HER ACCOSTER SPRANG INTO VIEW IN FRONT OF HER.

WAS THIS MORE OF HER DREAM, SPILLING INTO THE LIVING WORLD?

PERHAPS JOHN HAD BEEN
CORRECT ALL ALONG.

PERHAPS SHE HAD
INVITED THIS LUNACY
TO HERSELF WITH THE
VERY TABLETS SHE
HAD EVEN NOW
TREADING TO FINDER
UNDERFOOT.

WAS IT HER IMAGINATION,
OR HAD IT OPENED ITS ARMS,
AS IF TO EMBRACE HER?

BEFORE SHE COULD
STOP, SHE WAS
TOPPLING BACKWARDS.

AGAIN SHE MADE CONTACT WITH THE
DREAM-THING; AGAIN THE WHOLE
HORRID PICTURE APPEARED IN FRONT
OF HER, BUT THIS TIME IT DIDN'T
DISAPPEAR, BECAUSE THE APPARITION
HAD SNATCHED AT HER HAND
AND WAS GRASPING IT TIGHT.

UNABLE TO RESIST, SHE MET ITS GAZE.
THEY WERE NOT THE DEVIL'S EYES.
THEY WERE STUPID, EVEN COMICAL.

APPARENTLY SHE WAS NOT AFRAID.
HE WAS NO DEMON. IT WAS A
ILLUSION, BROUGHT ON BY EX-
HAUSTION AND PILLS. IT COULD
DO HER NO HARM.

THAT'S BETTER.
YOU JUST WANT
A BIT OF THE
OLD JAZZ, DON'T
YOU, GINNIE?

YOU DON'T EXIST. YOU'RE
ONLY IN MY MIND, LIKE JOHN
SAID. THE PILLS MADE YOU.
THE PILLS DID IT ALL.

YOU'RE NOT REAL,
ARE YOU? I'M
RIGHT, AREN'T I?

CERTAINLY.
I'M JUST A DREAM.
THAT'S ALL.

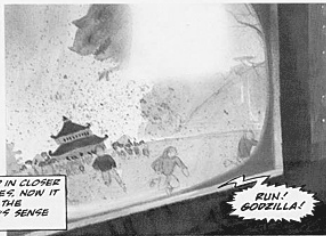
NO NEED TO FIGHT
ME, IS THERE? I'LL HAVE
COME AND GONE BEFORE
YOU KNOW IT.

HE WASN'T CERTAIN IF SHE
HEARD HIM, BUT NO MATTER.
HE COULD READILY MAKE
HIS INTENTIONS APPARENT.



HE HAD LEFT THEIR ROOM WITH THE GIRL WHO'D BROUGHT THE ICE WATER, AND THEY CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE TAKING A WALK TOGETHER IN WEATHER LIKE THIS.

THE THUNDER HAD MOVED IN CLOSER IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES, NOW IT WAS ALMOST OVERHEAD. THE LIGHTNING FUELED GYER'S SENSE OF OCCASION.



THE LATE MOVIE WAS NEARING ITS CLIMAX, THE SOUND TURNED UP DEAFENINGLY LOUD. THE WHOLE SCENE STANK OF BOURBON AND DEFEATIVITY. GYER MADE A NOTE OF IT FOR FUTURE USE IN THE PULPIT.



A CHILL BLEW IN FROM THE OFFICE. ALL THE WAY HERE HE'D HAD A SENSE OF BEING FOLLOWED, YET THERE WAS NOBODY ON HIS HEELS. HE CANCELLED HIS SUSPICION.



HIS BOMBAST AMAZED HER. SHE'D EXPECTED THIS SUBSPECIES TO BE EXTINCT BY NOW. COULD SUCH MELODRAMA BE CREDIBLE IN THIS SOPHISTICATED AGE?

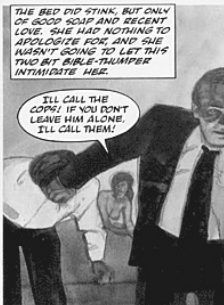


HE WOULD NOT BE PLEASED WITH THE SCENE THAT AWAITED HIM IN LAURA MAY'S ROOM.

EARL? EARL... ANSWER ME!

SADIE HAD NEVER MUCH LIKED CHURCH PEOPLE, BUT THIS EXAMPLE WAS PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE; THERE WAS MORE THAN A WHIFF OF MALICE BENEATH THE FLATULENCE.

SADIE HAD ALREADY BEEN THERE. SHE HAD WATCHED THE LOVERS FOR A LITTLE WHILE, UNTIL THEIR PASSION BECAME TOO MUCH FOR HER AND HAD DRIVEN HER OUT TO COOL HERSELF BY WATCHING THE RAIN.



SOMETIMES WHEN THE DAYS WERE LONG AND LONELY, LAURA MAY HAD DAYDREAMED DARK MEN LIKE THE EVANGELIST. SHE HAD IMAGINED THEM COMING BEFORE TORNADOES, WEATHERED IN DUST. SHE HAD PICTURED HERSELF LIFTED UP BY THEM-- ONLY HOLE AGAINST HER WILL--AND TAKEN AWAY.



BUT THIS MAN WHO HAD LAIN IN HER BED TONIGHT... IF HE WERE TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF GYER, WHOSE IMAGE SHE HAD CONJURED IN HER DESPERATION, SHE WOULD NEVER FORGIVE HERSELF.



WHAT'S GOING ON?

NEVER MIND. JUST CALL ALVIN AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT OR WE'RE GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER MURDER ON OUR HANDS.

THE THOUGHT OF SLAUGHTER GALVANIZED MILTON GYER. HE AND LAURA MAY KNEW THAT, ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS, ALVIN BAKER AND HIS DEPUTY COULD BE A LONG TIME COMING.



A THRILL OF RECOGNITION MADE SAPIE'S SCALP TINGLE AS HER EYES ALIGHTED ON HER 39. SO IT WAS LAURA MAY WHO HAD FOUND THE GUN. THE WHEE-FACED SIX-YEAR-OLD WHO HAD BEEN RUNNING UP AND DOWN THE WALKWAY ALL THAT EVENING THIRTY YEARS AGO, PLAYING GAMES WITH HERSELF AND SINGING SONGS IN THE HOT STILL AIR.



WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT YOU BEEN DOING, LAURA MAY?

NEVER MIND, PA. THERE'S NO TIME TO EXPLAIN.

BUT THERE'S MEN OUT THERE--

I KNOW, I KNOW. I WANT YOU TO CALL THE SHERIFF IN PANNHOLE. UNDERSTAND?



IN THE MEANWHILE, GOD ALONE KNEW WHAT THE MAD-PER PREACHER WOULD BE CAPABLE OF.



IT DELIGHTED SAPIE TO SEE THE MURDER WEAPON AGAIN.

MAYBE, SHE THOUGHT, I HAVE LEFT SOME SIGN OF MYSELF TO HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE. MAYBE I AM MORE THAN A HEADLINE ON A YELLOWED NEWSPAPER, A DIMMING MEMORY IN AGING HEADS.



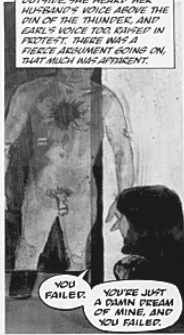
VIRGINIA LOOKED AT THE SEEDY
FIGURE LEANING ON THE DOOR
LINTEL ACROSS FROM HER.

SHE HAD LET THE DELUSION SHE HAD
CONJURED HAVE WHAT WAY IT WOULD WITH
HER, AND NEVER IN HER FORTY-ODD YEARS
HAD SHE HEARD SUCH DEPRAVITY PROMISED.



BUT THOUGH THE
SHADOW HAD COME
AT HER AGAIN AND
AGAIN, IT HAD
FAILED TO CARRY
ONE ACT OF VIOLATION THROUGH.
THREE TIMES IT
HAD TRIED, THREE
TIMES THE URGENT
WORDS WHISPERED
IN HER EAR HAD
NOT BEEN
REALIZED.

IT'S FACE WAS CLEAR ENOUGH
FOR HER TO READ THE RAF-
FLEMENT AND SHAME IN ITS
FEATURES. IT VIEWED HER,
SHE THOUGHT, WITH
MURDER ON ITS MIND.



OUTSIDE, SHE HEARD HER
HUSBAND'S VOICE ABOVE THE
PIN OF THE THUNDER, AND
EARL'S VOICE TOO, RAISED IN
PROTEST, THERE WAS A
FIERCE ARGUMENT GOING ON,
THAT MUCH WAS APPARENT.

YOU
FAILED.

YOU'RE JUST
A DAMN DREAM
OF MINE, AND
YOU FAILED.



SHE DIDN'T UNDER-
STAND WHY IT HADN'T
EVAPORATED, BUT
IT'S FAILED RAFFES
LEFT IT BEREFT OF
POWER OVER HER.

I'M
LEAVING

WHERE
ARE YOU
GOING?

OUT.
TO HELP
EARL.



NO, I HAVEN'T
FINISHED WITH YOU.

YOU'RE JUST
A PHANTOM.
YOU CAN'T
STOP ME.

I'M NO DELUSION, WOMAN.
I'M BUCK PURNING, THIRTY
YEARS AGO I WAS SHOT DEAD
IN THIS VERY ROOM. JUST
ABOUT WHERE YOU'RE
STANDING IN FACT.



"WE CAME BACK TONIGHT, SAPIE AND
I. A ONE NIGHT STAND AT THE
SLAUGHTERHOUSE OF LOVE. THAT'S
WHAT THEY CALLED THIS PLACE. DID
YOU KNOW THAT?"

PEOPLE USED TO COME HERE FROM ALL OVER, JUST TO SEE WHERE SADIE DURNING SHOT HER HUSBAND BUCK. SICK PEOPLE, VIRGINIA. DON'T YOU THINK MORE INTERESTED IN MURDER THAN LOVE. NOT ME. I'VE ALWAYS LIKED LOVE. YOU KNOW? ALMOST THE ONLY THING I'VE EVER HAD MUCH OF A TALENT FOR IN FACT.

YOU LIED TO ME. YOU USED ME.

I HAVEN'T FINISHED YET. IN FACT I'VE BARELY STARTED.

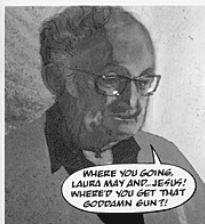
BUT THIS TIME SHE WAS READY FOR HIM.

HE WASN'T GOING TO HUMILIATE HIMSELF WITH PURSUIT. SHE WOULD HAVE TO COME BACK. WOULDN'T SHE? IF SHE TOLD HER COMPANIONS WHAT SHE'D SEEN, THEY'D CALL HER CRAZY. MAYBE LOOK HER UP WHERE HE COULD HAVE HER ALL TO HIMSELF. NO. HE HAD A WINNER HERE.

I'LL BE WAITING!
YOU HEAR ME, BITCH?
I'LL BE WAITING!

SHE WOULD RETURN SOAKED TO THE SKIN, HER DRESS CLINGING TO HER IN A DOZEN FETCHING WAYS. PANICKY FERNAPS, TERRIFUL, TOO WEAK TO RESIST HIS OVERTURES.

THEY'D MAKE MUSIC THEN. OH YEA.
UNTIL SHE BEGGED HIM TO STOP.







PLEASE, LAURA MAY...
GET OUT OF HERE. HE'S
LOST HIS MIND.

IF YOU
DON'T LET GO
OF HIM...

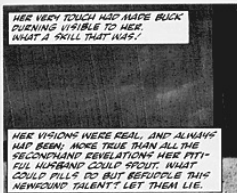
YEST WHAT
WILL YOU DO,
MADAM?

I'LL SHOOT!
I WILL!
I'LL SHOOT!

OVER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE
OFFICE BUILDING VIRGINIA SPOTTED
ONE OF THE PILL BOTTLES GYER
HAD THROWN INTO THE MUD.



BUT SHE DIDN'T NEED PILLS ANYMORE.
DID SHE? SHE'D SPOKEN WITH A
DEAD MAN.



HER VERY TOUCH HAD MADE BUCK
TURNING VISIBLE TO HER.
WHAT A SKILL THAT WAS!

HER VISIONS WERE REAL, AND ALWAYS
HAD BEEN; MORE TRUE THAN ALL THE
SECONDHAND REVELATIONS HER PITI-
FUL HUSBAND COULD SPOUT. WHAT
COULD PILLS DO BUT BEFUDDLE THIS
NEWFOUND TALENT? LET THEM LIE.



WAS THERE
BEEN AN
ACCIDENT?

AS THE WORDS LEFT
THE WOMAN'S LIPS...



BLAM

JOHN.

BEFORE THE ECHOES OF THE SHOT
HAD DIED, SHE WAS MAKING HER
WAY TOWARDS THEIR SOURCE, A
PRAYER COMING AS SHE RAN. SHE
PRAYED NOT THAT THE SCENARIO
SHE HAD IMAGINED WAS WRONG,
BUT RATHER THAT GOD WOULD
FORGIVE HER FOR WILLING
IT TRUE.



THE SCENE SHE FOUND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BUILDING CONFOUNDED ALL HER EXPECTATIONS.

EVEN AS VIRGINIA'S EYES SETTLED ON LAURA MAY, A FIGURE STEPPED THROUGH THE RAIN...

OH LORD, I THANK YOU.



LAURA MAY CLEARLY DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW SHE'D DROPPED THE GUN. VIRGINIA KNEIN, SHE COULD SEE THE PHANTOM, ALBEIT FLEETINGLY, AND SHE GUESSED ITS IDENTITY.



DON'T BE DEAD EARL. I BEG YOU, DON'T BE DEAD!



MISSED ME BY A MILE.

...I THANK YOU FOR PRESERVING THIS, YOUR INSTRUMENT, IN HIS HOUR OF NEED...

VIRGINIA SHUT OUT THE IDIOT DRIVER. THIS WAS THE MAN WHO HAD CONVINCED HER SO DEEPLY OF HER OWN DELUSORY STATE THAT SHE'D GIVEN HERSELF TO BUCK BURNING.



WELL, NO MORE. SHE'D BEEN TERRORIZED ENOUGH. SHE'D SEEN SADDIE ACT UPON THE REAL WORLD. SHE'D FELT BUCK DO THE SAME.

THE TIME WAS NOW RIFE TO REVERSE THE PROCEDURE.



IS THIS WISE?

VIRGINIA DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS INSIDOM ANYHOW? NOT THE STALE RHETORIC OF DEAR PROPHETS.

MAYBE INSIDOM WAS LAURA MAY AND EARL EMBRACING IN THE MUD, CARELESS OF THE PRAYERS OVER WAS SPENDING.



NOT BUCK? SURELY NOT.

HE ATTACKED ME.

YOU POOR LAMB.

I'M NO LAMB, NOT ANYMORE.



OR PERHAPS INSIDOM WAS FINDING THE GANCER IN YOUR LIFE AND ROOTING IT OUT ONCE AND FOR ALL. GUN IN HAND SHE HEADED BACK TO ROOM SEVEN.

REALIZING THAT THE WOMAN WAS PERFECTLY IN CHARGE OF HER DESTINY, SADIE HUNG BACK, FEARFUL THAT HER PRESENCE WOULD ALERT BUCK.



YOU CAME BACK.

I KNEW YOU WOULD.

THEY ALWAYS DO.

I WANT YOU TO SHOW YOURSELF...

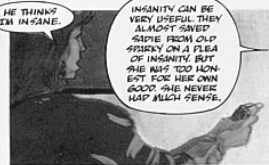


I'M NAKED AS A BABE AS IT IS. WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO. SKIN MYSELF MIGHT BE FUN, AT THAT.

SHOW YOURSELF TO JOHN, MY HUSBAND. MAKE HIM SEE HIS ERROR.



OH, POOR JOHN. I DON'T THINK HE WANTS TO SEE ME, DO YOU?



HE THINKS I'M INSANE.

INSANITY CAN BE VERY USEFUL THEY ALMOST SAVED SADIE FROM OLD SPIRKY ON A PLEA OF INSANITY. BUT SHE WAS TOO NON-EST FOR HER OWN GOOD. SHE NEVER HAD MUCH SENSE.

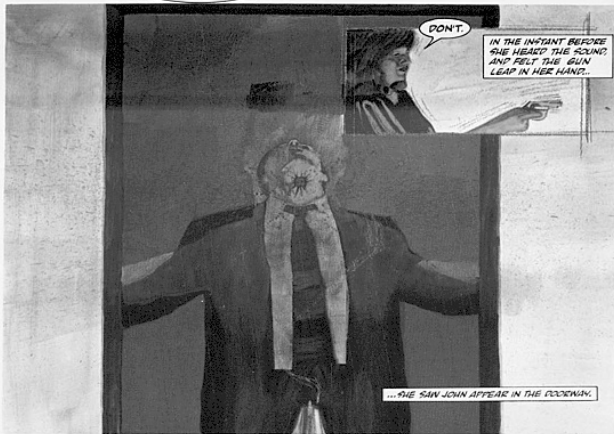
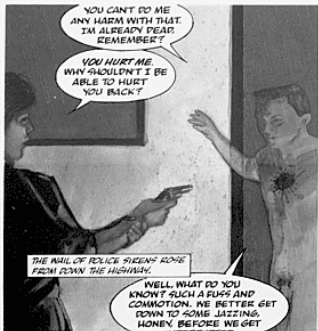


BUT YOU...NOW, I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU.

COME AND GET IT VIRGINIA. GRUB'S UP.



NOT THIS TIME.



HAD HE BEEN THERE ALL ALONG,
OR WAS HE COMING OUT OF THE
RAIN, PRAYERS DONE TO READ
REVELATIONS TO HIS EXING WIFET

SHE WOULD NEVER KNOW.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS NOTHING IN ROOM SEVEN BUT
VIRGINIA, HER DYING HUSBAND, AND THE SOUND OF THE RAIN.

NOW JOHN WOULD NEVER KNOW.
THAT WAS THE PITY OF IT. HE
COULD NEVER BE AWARE TO
CONCEDE HIS STUPIDITY AND
REGRET HIS APOLOGANCE.

NOT THIS SIDE OF THE GRAVE.
ANYHOW. HE WAS SAFE, DAMN
HIM, AND SHE WAS LEFT WITH A
SMOKING GUN IN HER HAND.

PUT DOWN THE
GUN AND COME
OUT OF THERE!

THE VOICE FROM THE LOT SOUNDED
HARSH AND UNCOMPROMISING.

VIRGINIA DIDN'T ANSWER.

YOU HEAR ME IN
THERE? THIS IS SHER-
IFF BAKER. THE PLACE IS
SURROUNDED, SO COME OUT
OR YOU'RE DEAD.

THEY WOULDN'T EXECUTE HER FOR WHAT SHE'D DONE,
THE WAY THEY HAD SAPIE, BUT SHE'D BE IN PRISON FOR
A LONG TIME, AND SHE WAS TIRED OF FIGHTING.

BETTER
TO FINISH
HERE.

IS THAT
WISE?

THEY'LL LOCK
ME AWAY. I COULDN'T
FACE THAT.

TRUE. THEY'LL PUT
YOU BEHIND BARS.
BUT IT WON'T BE
FOR LONG.

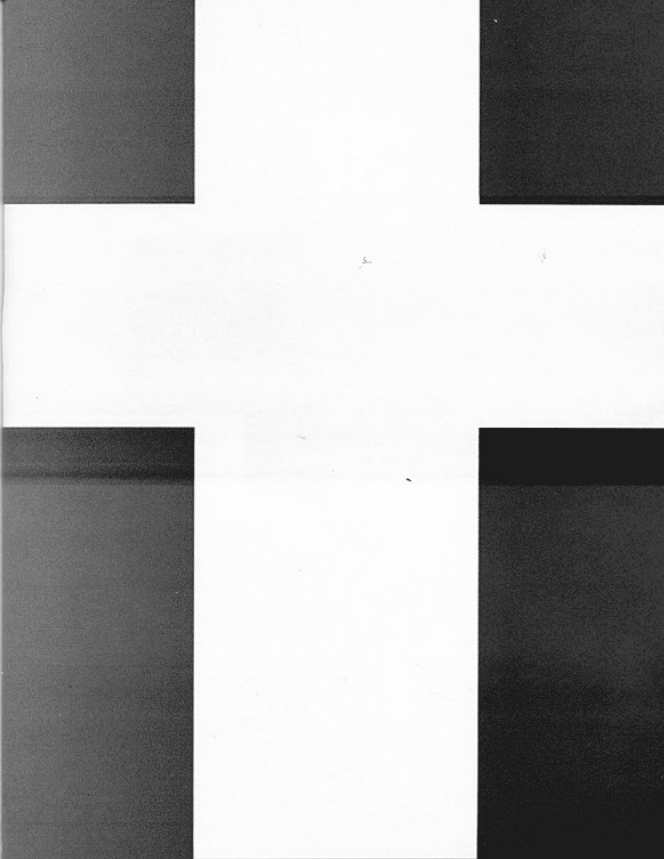
YOU DIDN'T
MEAN TO. YOU
WERE AIMING
AT BUCK.

YOU MUST BE
JOKING. I JUST
SHOT MY HUSBAND
IN COLD BLOOD.

WAS I?
I WONDER.



THE END

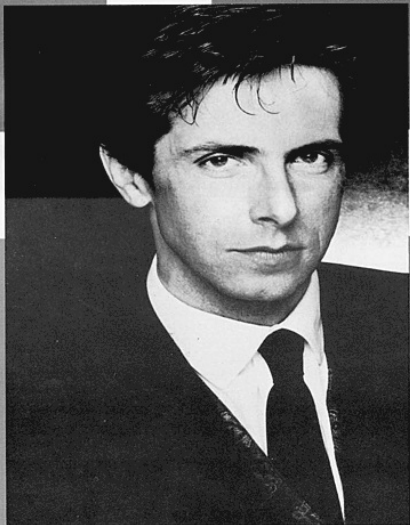


CLIVE BARKER

CLIVE BARKER was born in 1952 in Liverpool, and now resides in Beverly Hills. Clive Barker's extraordinary stories have captivated millions of readers and filmgoers. With his short stories in the *Books of Blood* and such best-selling novels as *Weaveworld*, *Cabal*, *The Damnation Game*, *The Great and Secret Show*, and *Imajica*; in his spectacular films *Hellraiser*, *Hellbound*, and *Nightbreed*; and through the graphic novel adaptations of his stories and ideas in *Tapping the Vein*, *Son of Celluloid*,

Revelations, *Hellraiser*, and *Nightbreed*, Barker has utilized all aspects of popular culture to create an indelible and unique vision of modern horror and fantasy. Two coffee table books about Barker—*Clive Barker, Illustrator*, which includes character designs for many

of his films; and *Pandemonium*, which features a never-before-published play—offer insight into the mind of the acclaimed fantasist. Upcoming Barker stories to be illustrated by modern masters of sequential art include *Dread*, *Age of Desire*, *Life of Death*, *Rawhead Rex*, and *The Great and Secret Show*.





Steve Niles

STEVE NILES spends his time touring and recording with the band Gray Matter, when he's not slaving over his typewriter. His first work in publishing was the production of a limited edition portfolio of Clive Barker's *Books of Blood* cover illustrations. For Eclipse/Arcane he edited and contributed to a four-volume comics horror anthology, *Fly in My Eye*, *Saturday Mourning Fly in My Eye*, *Daughters of Fly in My Eye*, and the upcoming *Fly in My Eye Exposed*. He has also edited for Eclipse/Arcane *Clive Barker, Illustrator*, a coffee table book of Barker's artwork. He has adapted Clive Barker's *Son of Celluloid*, and *Revelations* for Eclipse, as well as the Richard Matheson vampire novel *I Am Legend*. Among his upcoming comics adaptations are Barker's *How Spoilers Bleed*, *Down Satan*, and *Rawhead Rex*. His other Eclipse credits include editing and contributing to the comics anthology *Anxiety Times* and editing the graphic adaptation of Fritz Lang's *M*, by Jon J Muth. Niles continues to write original comic stories for various publications and to survive the life of a musician in Washington, DC.

Lionel Talaro

LIONEL TALARO was born June 2 1960, in San Diego, California, where he still resides. He attended San Diego City College and Southern California Art Institute in Calabasas, California, where he developed his technique, a combination of gouache and pencil on gessoed board. Since 1986, he has created illustrations for advertising and a wide variety of publications. His clients include Budweiser, Twentieth Century Fox, United Airlines and Infotronics. *Revelations* marks his comics premiere. He is illustrating the upcoming Clive Barker graphic novel *Sex, Death and Starshine*.

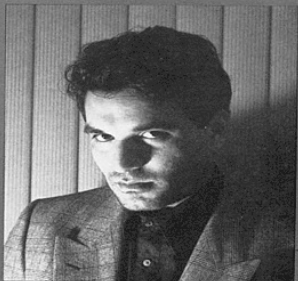


Photo © 1991 Anna Talaro

June 2, 1955

**Buck and Sadie Durning check into the Cottonwood Motel.
Buck Durning never checks out.**



**Four months later, Sadie Durning is executed.
For her husband's murder.**

June 2, 1985

**John and Virginia Gyer check into the Cottonwood Motel,
where the ghosts of Buck and Sadie have returned
to relive the fateful drama of three decades before.
It is to be a night of...**

REVELATIONS

**Acclaimed fantasist Clive Barker brings us
a ghost story of compelling violence and haunting beauty,
in which the visions of a Christian evangelist
and the dreams of his pill-popping wife
do battle on a night that can only end in tragedy.**

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